

Table 1. Rainfall (mm) at two sites in Somalia in 1989

	Afgooye ¹			Jenaale ²		
	1989	normal	% of normal	1989	normal	% of normal
Jan	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Feb	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Mar	22.6	7.6	297.4	0.0	5.7	0.0
Apr	57.2	87.8	65.1	78.2	109.9	71.2
May	154.1	92.9	165.9	51.1	82.3	62.1
Jun	77.9	57.6	135.2	95.9	78.1	122.8
Jul	9.4	53.8	17.5	21.9	61.3	35.7
Aug	8.7	22.9	38.0	17.6	48.4	36.4
Sep	34.3	11.9	288.2	22.2	18.3	121.3

¹ 38 km NE of Aw Dheegle² 24 km SW of Aw Dheegle

at the two meteorological stations nearest to the Goliath Heron observation point. They relate monthly precipitations from January to September 1989 to the normal pattern of the *Gu* season, which is the main, and more reliable, of the two rainy periods. These data seem to indicate that breeding in this case could have been triggered by the peak rains in May–June, especially since they were rather copious in 1989, thus supporting the assumption that laying would normally occur during the rainy season.

References

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Fruit-eating sunbirds

While visiting Kokota Island (6°17'S, 39°10'E), an islet on the western side of Pemba, Tanzania, five of the endemic Pemba Sunbirds *Nectarinia pembae* were observed feeding in an unusual fashion. Early in the afternoon of 7 February 1993, four male and one female *N. pembae* were seen feeding actively in a fruiting *Flueggia virosa* shrub. At first it was assumed that the birds were searching for small insects amongst the foliage and fruit, however, closer observation with 10 x 40 binoculars at under 15 m range proved otherwise. The birds jabbed at the small creamy-white berries, extracted small segments which were then swallowed. Smaller berries were plucked and ingested whole. The sunbirds appeared to be unconcerned at our presence—ISCP had ap-

proached them to within 2 m—and they continued feeding on the fruits when we left the site after 15 min of observation.

The fruits of *Flueggia virosa* is eaten by children in Pemba and Zanzibar. In Pemba the shrub is called *mususi mizi*, while on Zanzibar it is known as *mkwamba*. We tasted the ripe berries and found them pulpy and sweet.

Chapin (1954) records instances of berries being found in the stomachs of four species of *Anthreptes* sunbirds and in three out of six stomachs of Olive Sunbirds *N. olivacea* in Zaïre. In southern Africa Maclean (1985) records the Collared Sunbird *Anthreptes collaris* eating small berries.

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A breeding record for the African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* in Tanzania

On 10 August 1990 at Lake Eyasi (35°20'E, 3°26'S) in northern Tanzania, I found a small colony of African Spoonbills *Platalea alba*. The water level in the lake was high for the time of year but was receding quite fast and the small island on which the birds were nesting was only some 100 m from the shore with the surrounding water 60 cm deep.

There were 26 active nests, 14 with young, some of which could walk; the remaining nests contained eggs. Some clutches were still being incubated but a few were probably abandoned. An abandoned egg measured 71.4 x 45.1 mm. A more rounded, less pointed egg found at the nesting site measured 91.6 x 58.6 mm and was probably of a Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* from an earlier breeding attempt.

Britton (1980) does not list Lake Eyasi as a breeding locality for the African Spoonbill and Brown & Britton (1980) give laying dates as February to April for 250 records and May for one record within their Region C, which includes Lake Eyasi. However, within their Region D, less than 100 km to the west, breeding is "much more elastic" and includes July and August.

References

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